

Why Broward County Government Should Support the Sistrunk Boulevard/NE6th Streetscape and Urban Design Improvement Project

Numerous key events have preceded the current request to turn NE 6th Street/Sistrunk Blvd. over to the City of Fort Lauderdale. Some of them are listed below:

Timeline

- May 15, 2001 and March 19, 2002 County Approval of Sistrunk Blvd Concept
- Sistrunk Project Design Begins in November 2003
- August 8, 2004 City requested the road to be transferred to City jurisdiction
- February 2005 Sistrunk Boulevard Traffic study was rejected by the County citing traffic concerns
- May 19, 2005, following the Sistrunk Community Forum City Resolution 05-88 passes the City Commission requesting the County to transfer Sistrunk Blvd. to the City
- December 6, 2005 – City of Fort Lauderdale plans to present its 2nd Traffic Report to the Broward County Commission and will again request the road be transferred to the City.

Why should Sistrunk Boulevard be narrowed?

In addition to the community's desire to return this roadway to its original condition Sistrunk Boulevard has been designed as a two-lane roadway for the following reasons:

- To rebuild Sistrunk as a predominantly neighborhood serving street
- To create a lively, pedestrian-friendly street which includes protected, on-street parking
- To direct and encourage the physical and economic revitalization of the corridor
- To strengthen neighborhood structure and enhance overall local quality of life.

How was the vision for the NE 6th Street/Sistrunk Blvd Streetscape Enhancement Project developed?

The vision was developed after a lengthy meeting and information gathering process that reached every segment of the community using the following strategies:

- Meetings with local churches
- Survey of local business owners
- Workshops with local business owners
- Presentations to numerous community and civic organizations
- Meetings with local homeowners associations

How much funding has been spent and is dedicated for the development and construction of this new roadway?

- Over \$1.5 million has been spent on concept development and design
- Over \$14.5 million of local, state and federal resources are available for the construction of the designed road improvements which includes:
 - ✓ \$1.3 million earmarked for traffic calming for the neighborhoods
 - ✓ Approximately \$10 million for construction and R.O.W. acquisition
 - ✓ Approximately \$2.6 million from congressional appropriation for proposed Sistrunk improvements
 - ✓ Approximately \$600,000 FDOT grants for roadway construction and transit improvements.

Why is the construction of a new NE 6th Street/Sistrunk Boulevard important to the overall economic health of the City of Fort Lauderdale and Broward County?

One of the key goals of the revitalization of the NE 6th Street/Sistrunk corridor is to create a high-quality, pedestrian-oriented environment – one that is not only attractive and responsive to the human scale, but which also fosters a distinct sense of place and sensitivity to the history of the area.

NE 6th Street/Sistrunk Blvd. is the most historically significant commercial corridor in the Northwest Fort Lauderdale area. The street is the primary artery that serves the resident population of the adjacent neighborhoods by providing a convenient location to access basic goods and services such as groceries, medical services/supplies, grooming services and access to government offices. Its proximity to the downtown area also makes it a prime location for growth for both the residential and retail sectors of the Broward County economy.

The Sistrunk improvement project is an integral part of the existing vision developed by the community for the Fort Lauderdale Community Redevelopment Agency. The vision for the agency has been well documented in its Strategic Finance Plan, which has helped establish the merits of borrowing against future tax increment revenues to pay for the much needed road improvements for this critical corridor in the Northwest Fort Lauderdale area.

How will this project enhance the overall "quality of life" in the area?

The Sistrunk Blvd./NE6th Street roadway and the Northwest Fort Lauderdale have struggled to find its unique position as a neighborhood and destination within the framework of downtown Fort Lauderdale. According to the 2000 Census, the Northwest Fort Lauderdale neighborhoods have some of the highest concentrations of poverty and unemployment, and is the location of a significant inventory of sub-standard housing. The neighborhoods specifically connected to Sistrunk Blvd. have lacked opportunities to take advantage of the explosion in development activity that is occurring in adjacent neighborhoods throughout Fort Lauderdale and Broward County. For example, simple neighborhood services such as a quality, name-brand drug store or grocery store remain accessible to most residents only by car or mass transit.

A long-term goal of this project will be to merge the results of the existing development projects with potential development opportunities to create a sustainable development program to be implemented over the next 10 to 15 years. The NE 6th/Sistrunk project is a critical element to the success of the small business and retail development components of the long-term plans for the area.

Why would the denial of this project be an "opportunity lost" for the total strategic redevelopment of the neighborhoods of NW Fort Lauderdale?

The Fort Lauderdale Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has had some limited success in its efforts to revitalize this area of the city. The local and regional real estate and business economies have been fairly robust, however much of the market demand that has caused other sectors of the Broward County to experience unprecedented growth have been absent in parts of Northwest Fort Lauderdale. With the support of the CRA Board, the CRA Advisory Board and a variety of business and community organizations, the future of this urban core neighborhood is unlimited but will depend on a viable "main street" to support business and encourage development.

Will the narrowing of the roadway force traffic into the adjoining neighborhoods?

According to a recent City/CRA-sponsored traffic report conducted by McMahon and Associates, "...the proposed Sistrunk Boulevard as designed with construction of new turn lanes, modification of traffic signals and construction of additional bus bays, will accommodate the traffic flow. In addition, the planned traffic calming measures will both enhance the entrances to adjoining neighborhoods and sufficiently discourage traffic on local through streets".

The McMahon report was prepared in response to questions raised by Broward County officials. McMahon Associates, Inc. held various meetings with Broward County staff to comprehensively identify, analyze and address the County's concerns. It is the second of two independent traffic studies to reach this conclusion. The findings and recommendations offered in the report should more than adequately address the questions raised by the County from its initial review of the traffic report in 2005.